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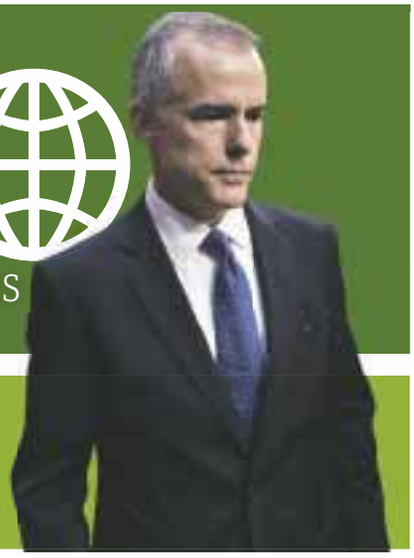

FBI DEPUTY DIRECTOR CALLS IT QUITS

Andrew McCabe steps down amid criticism. 8

A beginner's guide to getting cast in 'Hamilton.' 14

Dinwiddie and Burke are unlikely contributors for Nets, Knicks. 18

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RENT FREEZE

Winter may not have a lot going for it, but there is at least one silver lining for New Yorkers — cheaper rents. And right now, we're in the sweet spot. 4

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KRISTIN TOUSSAINT, REPORTER

When you're trying to find an apartment, you want the best deal. But shopping around isn't just about knowing which neighborhoods tend to have cheaper rents. The month you're apartment hunting for can impact the price you pay, according to a new report from RentHop. Read more on page 4 and at **metro.us** to see what month has the lowest rents in New York City and how much renting then could save you.

HOUSE PANEL VOTES TO RELEASE NUNES MEMO

The top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee said the panel voted along party lines on Monday to release a memo drafted by Rep. Devin Nunes that Republicans say shows anti-Trump bias at the Justice Department. Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff told reporters the committee had also voted not to release a Democratic-drafted memo that countered the Republican report. Amid growing partisan rancor over the investigation of possible collusion between President Donald Trump's campaign and Moscow, many of Trump's fellow Republicans had been clamoring for the release of the so-called Nunes Memo. Democrats have criticized that memo as "highly misleading" talking points intended to undermine the investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller into Trump and his associates. ***Read more on page 12.***

PENTAGON REVIEWING USE OF FITNESS APPS

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has ordered a review of security protocols, officials say, after fitness-tracking devices broadcast patterns of movement at military facilities around the world. Nathan Russer, a student at the Australian National University, drew attention to data when he wrote on Twitter about the images after stumbling upon GPS-tracking company Strava's Global Heatmap. "Once you look at Syria, you can see a bunch of bright spots," Russer said. His discovery prompted others to scour the heat map, turning up other possible locations of U.S. personnel who typically use high-tech fitness devices. Although many of the bases cited by Russer are known outposts for U.S. personnel, there are clear risks that such tracking devices pose, potentially disclosing not just the locations where foreign troops operate but the routes they travel.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

INDIA ACCIDENT

3 Indian police rescue people after a bus accident at the Ghogra Canal in Murshidabad district, around 187 miles from Kolkata on Monday. At least 36 people were killed in eastern India's West Bengal state early on Monday after a speeding passenger bus swerved off a bridge and plunged into a river, police said.

GETTY IMAGES

BLUE SUPER MOON LEADS TO RARE LUNAR DISPLAY

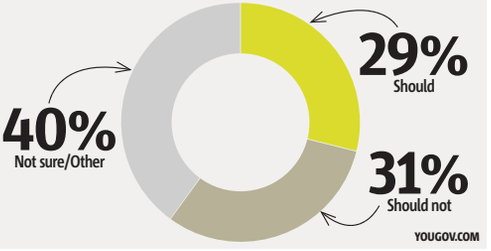
The moon will stage a rare triple show on Wednesday when a blue super moon combines with a total lunar eclipse that will be visible from western North America to eastern Asia, astronomers say. The overlap of a blue moon — the second full moon in a calendar month — with a lunar eclipse while the moon is at its closest approach to the earth is the first such celestial trifecta since 1982, said Noah Petro, a research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center outside Washington. "Just having these three things simultaneously occur is unusual," Petro said in a telephone interview. The total eclipse will be visible from the western United States and Canada across the Pacific Ocean to most of Australia and China, as well as northern polar regions. The eclipse will give the moon a reddish color known as a "blood moon."

FACEBOOK TO PROMOTE MORE LOCAL NEWS

Facebook Inc. Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said on Monday the social media website would focus on promoting local news in its latest update. "Starting today, we're going to show more stories from news sources in your local town or city," Zuckerberg said in a Facebook post. "If you follow a local publisher or if someone shares a local story, it may show up higher in News Feed." The update will be first rolled out in the U.S. then expanded to more countries later this year, Zuckerberg said. The company has been making a series of changes to its website, following criticism that its algorithms may have prioritized misleading news and misinformation in people's feeds, influencing the 2016 American presidential election as well as political discourse in other countries.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has decided to postpone an exhibition because of sexual harassment accusations against the artist, Chuck Close. Should work created by artists who are accused of sexual harassment be exhibited?



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Which month has the cheapest rents?

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

Rents may fluctuate throughout the year, so real estate site RentHop looked into the best and worst months to rent.

There are a lot of factors to consider when looking for an apartment, and apparently, what time of the year you're renting is a big one.

Real estate site RentHop released a report Monday looking into the best time of the year to rent a new place in cities throughout the country because, according to the site, different factors can cause fluctuations in prices throughout the year.

In the summer, for example, college students tend to be moving to start school or, if they recently graduated, moving somewhere new for work. In the winter, fewer people are apartment hunting because of the cold weather, which may mean cheaper rents.

But is that true in practice, rather than just theory? According to RentHop's research, yes — the best months to rent overall were between December and March, while the worst were between May and October.

On average, those "best" months resulted in a 3.9 percent discount on rent, as compared to the worst months.

In New York City, the savings was even higher, with a max discount of about 5.4 percent.

The single best month to rent a new one-bedroom place in New York was February, when rents average $3,000, according to the report, and the worst was July, when rents are up to $3,171. Choosing to rent in the winter could mean saving as much as $171 per month for a one-bedroom, or more than $2,000 a year.

For a two-bedroom, the results were pretty similar. The best month to rent a two-bed in New York City was February ($3,400), while the worst was June ($3,591). Renting in February could mean saving up to $191 per month.

However, apartment searching in the winter, RentHop acknowledged, could mean fewer options overall.

To get the best deal on an apartment, you may have to start your lease in the winter, according to a new report. ISTOCK

"Generally, higher turnover means more possible apartments (though they'll likely get swooped up faster!)" the report noted. "There might ultimately be a trade-off between cheaper rents versus potentially larger selection that renters should be cognizant of."

"There might ultimately be a trade-off between cheaper rents versus potentially larger selection that renters should be cognizant of."

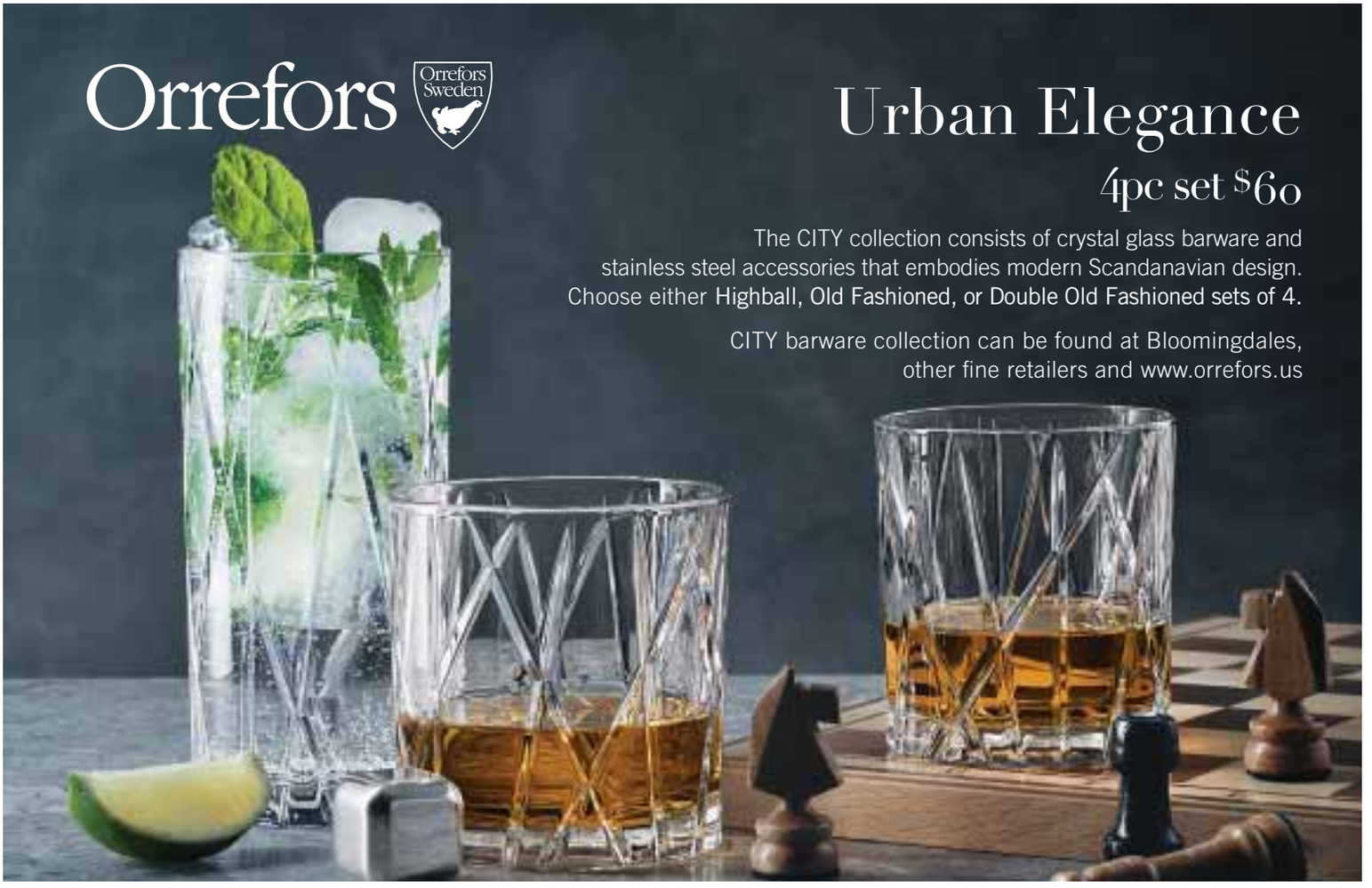
RentHop, in a new report

5.4%

ACCORDING TO RENTHOP, IN NYC, THE SAVINGS ON RENTING BETWEEN DECEMBER AND MARCH WAS ABOUT 5.4 PERCENT.

$171

CHOOSING TO RENT IN THE WINTER COULD MEAN SAVING AS MUCH AS $171 PER MONTH FOR A ONE-BEDROOM.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Schumer calls on CDC to send 'flu surveillance team' to New York

This flu season has been particularly frightful in New York, so much so that Sen. Chuck Schumer has called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to send out a special "Domestic Flu Surveillance Team."

The state is facing a "historic" outbreak of influenza — more than 7,000 New Yorkers have been hospitalized this season, compared with about 4,300 people hospitalized by this same time last season — and thus needs help from the federal health protection agency, according to Schumer.

"A New York specific flu-surveillance team would help take the state's temperature on the epidemic and help break its fever," he said in a statement. "With record-setting highs this season, it's absolutely critical that New York have the resources it needs to track the flu's path, gather intelligence and combat this powerful virus."

New York is facing a "historic" outbreak of influenza. GETTY IMAGES

The CDC should "immediately designate" a special domestic flu team for New York, he added, "to home in on the virus and augment the great work of our local hospitals and health departments."

In total, there have been more than 25,000 laboratory-confirmed cases of the flu this season, according to the state's health department, and one pediatric flu-related death. By this time last season, there were about 16,850 lab-confirmed cases of the flu statewide.

As of Jan. 18, the weekly rate of influenza hospitalizations in New York was the highest it had been since the state began reporting the data in 2004, according to the health department.

Over the last four years, New York state has seen a total of 25 flu deaths — eight of which occurred last season — and an average of about 10,500 flu-related hospitalizations each year. Flu season is prominent from October through May and often peaks in February.

In a letter to CDC Director Brenda Fitzgerald, Schumer asked for help from the agency in collecting and analyzing data on how to target the flu and provide city and state officials here with "all the federal resources they need to combat this flu epidemic."

On Thursday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo also addressed the epidemic, signing an executive order allowing pharmacists to administer flu vaccines to children between 2 and 18 years old as part of a "multipronged prevention effort."

In addition to getting the flu shot and staying home when sick, officials advise people to wash their hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds, carry alcohol-based hand sanitizer and not cough or sneeze into their hands.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT

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- My toes aren't straight- they are all cocked-up, bent and hurt.
- I have painful calluses on the ball of my foot which keep building up.
- I have corns on my toes which get thick no matter what shoe size I wear.
- The bottom of my heel hurts all day, but it's worse when I step out of bed in the morning.
- I have cramps in my legs which always happen when I walk the same distance.
- My ankles are swollen most of the time.
- My feet are always dry and scaly – sometimes they itch.
- My feet just hurt all over when I stand or walk a lot.
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NYC snow, rain in the forecast this week

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan@metro.us

Groundhog Day is slated for Friday, but someone should tell Punxsutawney Phil not to waste his time.

February will bring some snowy, cold weeks to the Northeast, according to the National Weather Service. GETTY IMAGES

After enjoying a glimpse of spring over the weekend, New Yorkers should prepare themselves for the return of unpleasant winter weather.

New York City can expect to see some light snow and drizzle this week, with the wintry mix expected to start on Monday afternoon and linger through Tuesday. The dreary precipitation will be accompanied by a drop in temperatures in the tri-state region.

Snow was expected to taper off mid-Tuesday, although flurries may appear Tuesday afternoon, with only light accumulation expected. And there is more snow due at the end of the week — on Groundhog Day, to be exact. The National Weather Service predicted a 30 percent chance of snow on Friday.

But the bad news doesn't end with this week's weather report.

Forecasters are predicting a particularly freezing February with "several chances of snow" for the New York region between Feb. 4 and Feb. 15, according to Accuweather. There is also a chance of snow on Super Bowl Sunday, meteorologists said.

"As waves of arctic air return to the northern part of the United States and warmth holds in the South, a busy winter storm track will set up during the first half of February," Accuweather.com reported.

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Is 'fake news' about to get way worse thanks to Google?

A new app allows anyone to publish news stories, photos and videos. GETTY IMAGES

Google is testing an app dedicated to hyperlocal "citizen journalism," which some analysts say will only worsen the epidemic of fake news.

The app, called Google Bulletin, is being tested in Oakland and Nashville, and allows anyone to publish news stories, photos and videos. Once uploaded to Bulletin, stories will instantly be available on Google News and Google Search. There are no provisions for fact-checking or editing, although Google says it will observe and remove stories and close accounts that violate their terms of service, including a "deceptive behavior" clause that forbids "accounts that impersonate any person or organization, or that misrepresent their primary purpose."

Some tech-industry observers' heads exploded Monday.

"The flaws in this model seem glaring," wrote Maya Kosoff of Vanity Fair, which called it a "fake-news disaster waiting to happen."

"Though Bulletin's guidelines cover harassment and hate speech, they don't address misinformation — an obvious danger considering that Bulletin's stories are fed directly to Google Search and Google News, and are intended to be easily shareable," Kosoff reported.

James Hetherington of the International Business Times worried that Bulletin could cripple the already struggling local-news industry. "The new platform could prove costly to regional newspapers and community news," he wrote.

Bulletin's test run comes after Facebook's decision to de-emphasize publishers in the News Feed and prioritize friends and family, after months of being roasted for allowing Russia to seed anti-Clinton, pro-Trump propaganda on the platform during the 2016 election. MICHAEL MARTIN

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FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe steps down amid criticism: Source

Republicans have criticized him in connection with the investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server.

FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, criticized by President Donald Trump for alleged bias against him and in favor of his 2016 Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, has stepped down as the agency's No. 2 official, a source familiar with the matter said Monday.

McCabe had been expected to leave the Federal Bureau of Investigation in March. He will remain on leave with the agency until his retirement date, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because a public announcement has not yet been made.

Asked about McCabe's departure, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters, "I can tell you the president wasn't part of this decision-making process." Sanders also said Trump continues to have "full confidence" in the FBI director, Christopher Wray.

McCabe served as acting FBI chief last year after Trump in May fired James Comey, whose agency was conducting an investigation into potential collusion between Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and Russia.

The Republican president later said he dismissed Comey over "this Russia thing," and the firing has become central to questions about whether Trump has sought to obstruct justice by impeding the Russian probe that Special Counsel Robert Mueller took over after Comey's ouster. Trump named Wray as FBI director to replace Comey.

An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment on McCabe.

McCabe's departure comes as Trump and some other Republicans have been stepping up their criticism of the FBI in a move that Democrats call part of a broader effort by Trump's party to undermine Mueller's investigation.

Republicans have noted that McCabe's wife previously ran for a seat in Virginia's state Senate and received donations from then-Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a close ally of Hillary and Bill Clinton, the former president.

Trump has taken to Twitter to blast McCabe, asking how he could be in charge of the Clinton probe when his wife got donations from "Clinton Puppets."

Trump in December referred to the FBI's reputation as being in "tatters," and has also publicly criticized U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions for recusing himself from the Russia probe, a move that paved the way for Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to appoint Mueller after Comey's firing.

A handful of Republican-led congressional committees have launched inquiries into whether the FBI botched the Clinton investigation and showed bias in her favor. In December, McCabe was grilled behind closed doors by lawmakers on several of those panels for hours.

Democrats have said those inquires are intended to undermine and distract from Mueller's investigation.

The Justice Department's inspector general is still conducting his own review into the FBI's handling of the Clinton investigation. McCabe's role is among those under scrutiny.

The inspector general is also looking into whether Comey made improper decisions, including his decision to announce the FBI would not recommend charges and his subsequent decision to publicly announce he was reopening the investigation just 11 days before the 2016 election, after new emails were discovered.

McCabe began his FBI career as a special agent in 1996, where he was assigned to the New York Field Office to investigate and supervise organized crime. REUTERS

President Trump has taken to Twitter to blast outgoing FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, pictured above in 2017. GETTY IMAGES

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Trump plans to address trade and immigration in his first State of the Union

President Donald Trump will deliver his first State of the Union address on Tuesday night. GETTY IMAGES

Expect the president to take a victory lap over tax cuts and record high stock markets.

President Donald Trump said on Monday he will address his proposed immigration overhaul in his State of the Union speech on Tuesday and will seek Democratic support for it.

After a swearing-in ceremony for new Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, Trump said his immigration overhaul will have to be bipartisan "because the Republicans don't really have the votes to get it done in any other way."

Trump also said his speech will cover his efforts to lower trade barriers around the world for American exports. "We have to have reciprocal trade. It's not a one-way deal anymore," he said.

Trump's speech comes on the back of a three-day government shutdown, and ahead of a Feb. 8 deadline for deeply divided Republicans and Democrats to agree on how to fund government and overhaul immigration laws.

The address, required by the U.S. Constitution, will focus on Trump's priorities in five areas, a senior administration official told reporters last week: jobs, infrastructure, immigration, trade and national security.

Here is what's in play:

Jobs

With unemployment for African-Americans, Hispanics and women at record lows, Trump will "make clear that all groups are benefiting under this presidency," the official said.

Trump may talk about first lady Melania Trump's guests for the speech, who are expected to include people who have benefited from the tax cuts.

Infrastructure

Trump has pledged to rebuild the nation's aging infrastructure, but has provided few details on his $1.7 trillion plan.

It is unlikely that he will delve too deeply into the plan during his speech, though the topic which has "large bipartisan support" will be a theme, the official said.

Immigration

Trump will make the case for letting Dreamers, immigrants brought into the country illegally as children, stay in the U.S. He will insist that lawmakers agree to pay for a wall on the southern border, as well as curb immigrants' ability to sponsor family members.

His immigration proposal has upset both pro-immigration groups who call it a bad trade, and hardliners who object to what they call "amnesty" for illegal immigrants.

Some Democratic lawmakers have invited "Dreamers" as guests to hear the speech in person.

Trade

Few issues fire up Trump more than seeing other countries sell more goods to the America than U.S. companies export in return. He will insist in his speech on "fair and reciprocal" trade deals, the official said.

Trump recently told Reuters he would discuss the U.S. trade imbalance with China during his State of the Union speech, and said he was considering retaliation over intellectual property issues.

The White House sought to temper expectations on Friday about how many specifics would be in the address.

National security

The speech will focus on domestic issues, but will include Trump's plea to beef up funding for the military and a discussion of top threats including North Korea's nuclear and missile tests.

The White House often struggles to keep momentum when Trump's tweets upstage his speeches.

For example, Trump was praised for his unifying tone in his first address to Congress last February. But days later, Trump accused Barack Obama on Twitter of ordering his "wires tapped" at Trump Tower. REUTERS

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Ex-NYC high school librarian gets 15 years in kidnap-murder plot

The librarian had worked at Manhattan's elite Stuyvesant High School.

Christopher Asch, a former librarian at Stuyvesant High School, received a 15-year prison sentence on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

A former New York City high school librarian was sentenced to 15 years in prison on Monday after he was found guilty of conspiring to kidnap, rape and murder women with people he met on internet message boards.

Christopher Asch, 65, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Paul Gardephe in Manhattan, who said there was "overwhelming evidence that Mr. Asch constitutes a danger to the community."

Asch's lawyer was not immediately available for comment.

Asch, who worked at Manhattan's Stuyvesant High School, was arrested in 2013 as a result of a federal investigation of former police Officer Gilberto Valle, dubbed the "cannibal cop" by New York media.

Valle was convicted of conspiring to kidnap and torture women in 2013, but Gardephe subsequently overturned that conviction, finding that Valle did not intend to follow through with fantasies he described online.

The men were registered users of DarkFetishNet, an online forum where tens of thousands of individuals share their musings about bizarre sexual fantasies, according to court filings.

Asch purchased a collection of tools that he intended to use to kidnap and torture women, including a stun gun and leg spreaders, prosecutors said in court papers. REUTERS

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Indians to drop Chief Wahoo logo after the 2018 season

The Cleveland Indians will drop their Chief Wahoo primary logo, a caricature of a smiling Native American, after the 2018 season, Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred announced Monday.

"Major League Baseball is committed to building a culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the game," Manfred said. "Over the past year, we encouraged dialogue with the Indians organization about the club's use of the Chief Wahoo logo. During our constructive conversations, [Indians owner] Paul Dolan made clear that there are fans who have a longstanding attachment to the logo and its place in the history of the team. Nonetheless, the club ultimately agreed with my position that the logo is no longer appropriate for on-field use in Major League Baseball."

The Cleveland Indians have made plans to quit using the Chief Wahoo logo. GETTY IMAGES

The controversial logo has been used on the hats and sleeves of Indians uniforms for the better part of the past seven decades having first appeared in 1947.

Even after the logo is eliminated, merchandise containing Chief Wahoo will still be sold in Northeast Ohio, but not on Major League Baseball's official website.

This is a subject that has been hotly contested over the years, and the Indians have taken small measures to start phasing out the logo. In the last five years, they reintroduced a block letter "C" reminiscent to the one used on hats and jerseys throughout the early portions of the 1900s.

While the elimination of Chief Wahoo is a step in the right direction for many, there are more who are looking to address the team's name.

The Cleveland MLB franchise adopted the name Indians in 1915, 15 years after its founding. Originally called the Lake Shores in 1900, a year before the American League was given major-league status, Cleveland's professional baseball team was named the Blues (short for Bluebirds), Bronchos and Naps — after Hall of Famer Napoleon Lajoie — before settling on the Indians.

JOE PANTORNO

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What is the Nunes memo? What will its release reveal?

The facts behind #releasethememo.

Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA) wrote a four-page memo on the ongoing Russia investigation. GETTY IMAGES

On Monday, Republicans on Capitol Hill and a Twitter campaign — that may have been spurred by Russian bots — were calling for the release of a four-page memo written by Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA) related to the Russia investigation. Democrats opposed the release. Only some members of the House have seen it. Assistant Attorney General Stephen Boyd warned it would be "extraordinarily reckless" to release it.

What is the Nunes memo's content?

So what's in the memo, and why is it so controversial? The memo's thesis is that the Justice Department abused its authority to spy on President Donald Trump associates. It focuses on Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's decision to grant an extension on surveillance of Trump associate Carter Page, Newsweek reported. Nunes has argued that the FBI and DOJ sought the warrant based on information in the Christopher Steele dossier, which alleges years of cooperation between Trump and the Russians. But Newsweek pointed out that warrants are rarely granted on the basis of one piece of information.

Republicans said the memo sticks to the facts, and some who've seen it say it reveals a scandal that's "worse than Watergate." Democrats argue that the memo, written without their input, is politically motivated to discredit special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Trump and Russia — and, specifically, to undercut Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who has refused to fire Mueller. Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee said it's a "misleading set of talking points attacking the FBI." On Monday, Rep. Eric Swalwell, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said it is riddled with "deliberate inaccuracies."

Only some members of the House have seen the memo, although the Intelligence Committee has voted to allow all members to see it. Nunes, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has refused to let his counterpart in the Senate, Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), see the memo. The FBI, DOJ and Trump have not seen the memo either, Newsweek reported.

On Monday, Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA) tweeted, "As a Member of the House Judiciary Committee, I read the partisan, classified Nunes House Intel memo. I can't talk about it. However, here's an analogy. Remember Geraldo Rivera and the infamous Mystery of Al Capone's Vaults? It's like that, but Geraldo Rivera has more integrity."

When will the Nunes memo be released?

Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee, who hold a majority, voted in a party-line vote on Monday night to release the memo. President Trump now has five days to block it. If he doesn't, its contents will be published. Trump reportedly is not opposed to its release.

Two weeks ago, a Twitter campaign with the hashtag #releasethememo popped up. For a time, it was the top trending hashtag among Russian-linked Twitter accounts, The Hill reported.

MICHAEL MARTIN

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In 2016, Andreas Kern and Paul Cibis were both invited to perform at the Hong Kong Music Festival, but with only one available slot remaining on the concert schedule. Rather than have one of them relinquish the opportunity, the festival encouraged them to perform together. Less than pleased with the suggestion and determined to outperform each other, Kern and Cibis opted to carry out the challenge on stage, and let the audience decide in what has become an international sensation and a talent competition like no other.

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Alec Baldwin said something bad

Say what you will about Alec Baldwin, but he sure doesn't know when to shut his damn trap.

His latest offense? Comparing Dylan Farrow to a fictional character who lied about her rape in "To Kill a Mockingbird," a novel that was released in 1960. Classy!

The 59-year-old took to Twitter to defend Woody Allen again, writing, "1 of the most effective things Dylan Farrow has in her arsenal is the 'persistence of emotion. Like Mayella in TKAM, her tears/exhortations r meant 2 shame u in2 belief in her story. But I need more than that before I destroy some1, regardless of their fame."

As Vulture points out, Baldwin essentially tried to make a point about how Dylan Farrow wasn't sexually abused by her father by comparing her to a literary character who was sexually abused by her father.

As always, Baldwin doth protest too much. Either that, or details are just far too inconvenient for him.

Yet again.

Too little, too late, Kate.
ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Kate Winslet's 'bitter regrets'

Why, yes: This is another Woody Allen story. This time, we're talking about Kate Winslet. Please: Sit by the fire, whiskey in hand, and join me for a of dark, depressing tale.

When asked about her history of working with Allen, Winslet has famously said things like, "It's just a difficult discussion" and "I think on some level Woody [Allen] is a woman." Now, she's changing her tune in the most noncommittal way possible.

The "Wonder Wheel" actress spoke out about working with abusers in the past, without naming names, at the London Critics Circle Film Awards this weekend.

"I wouldn't be able to stand here this evening and keep to myself some bitter regrets that I have at poor decisions to work with individuals with whom I wish I had not," she said in part.

I don't know, Kate. At this point, it might be better to just lump yourself in with the Alec Baldwins and keep it moving. You can keep your regrets, babe.

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A beginner's guide to getting cast in 'Hamilton'

Chatting with actor J. Quinton Johnson about his new role in the pop culture phenomenon.

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

Johnson plays Hercules Mulligan and James Madison in the hit show. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

It usually takes years of toil and sweat to land a role in the biggest Broadway show in New York, especially when that show is a pop-culture phenomenon like "Hamilton."

But J. Quinton Johnson is a self-professed die-hard fan of Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical. So when he saw an opportunity to land a role in "Hamilton," he took it.

This chance was presented to Johnson when he was working on the 2017 remake of "Dirty Dancing" alongside Andy Blankenbuehler, the Tony Award-winning choreographer on Miranda's "In The Heights" and "Hamilton."

"It was incredible working with Andy, and to be close to the thing that I have admired since watching 'In The Heights,'" he says. "'Hamilton' was the first Broadway show that I ever saw."

During production on "Dirty Dancing," Johnson quickly decided that he was going to show Blankenbuehler exactly how much he adored "Hamilton" by giving him an impromptu audition.

"I was so close, so there was no way I was going to finish that shoot without telling him how much his work has meant to me over the years. One night, Andy was walking down the stairs and I was just playing around on the piano."

He continues, "He was walking down, and in my head I was like, 'Do I do it?' Because I know the songs so well. And then I was like, 'Let's go for it.' So I started. I thought I would stop after like 8 bars. But then he was into it as I was rapping it. So I was like, 'I am all in now. I have to finish it.' So I did."

Clearly Blankenbuehler was impressed — on Jan. 6, 2017, J. Quinton Johnson made his Broadway debut in the dual role of Hercules Mulligan and James Madison in "Hamilton" at the Richard Rodgers Theatre.

But while Johnson is clearly reveling in his role in the Broadway smash, the actor is looking to the future. Unsurprisingly, he says he's inspired by Miranda's success.

"I want to write musicals," he says. "I like where film and musicals meet. ... I mean, to have written 'Hamilton' and have it to coincide alongside something like 'Moana?' I would love to compose for a Disney film like that."

Considering how Johnson managed to land his role in "Hamilton," only a fool would bet against the actor reaching the heights he has set.

Catch this cider craze

Cider catching at Brooklyn Cider House is the hot new way to do drink pairings.

EVA KIS
eva.kis@metro.us

Diners catch cider from four different barrels over the course of their meal. MICHAEL TULIPAN

A centuries-old Spanish tradition is New York's hot new dining trend.

At the newly opened Brooklyn Cider House, there's no sommelier pouring your drink pairings tableside. Instead, you'll be spending a good portion of your night poised under the spouts of 80-year-old chestnut barrels, ready to catch your drinks in a delicate pint glass.

"It's a really kind of lively dining experience," says Lindsey Storm, a refugee of the finance world who now goes by the title Cider Goddess as she leads the cider catches.

"People are catching from different barrels and hanging out, they're cheersing and talking, you're crossing paths with people from other tables. It's social, fun and festive all rolled into one."

Cider catching is the traditional way people enjoy cider in the Basque region, where Brooklyn Cider House owner Peter Yi fell in love with apples after a career in wine. He now owns Twin Star Orchards in upstate New York and makes four of his own Basque-inspired ciders.

But it's not just the cider they fell in love with. "What Peter wanted to do was replicate his whole experience, which was the food, the interaction of catching the cider and the social aspect of hanging out in the taproom," says Storm.

To bring the Basque country to Brooklyn, Yi chose a former warehouse where music and voices bounce off the soaring ceilings with a dining room half made up of communal tables, for a feeling that's more like a German beer hall than a conventional restaurant.

It also let him keep the towering barrels of cider, each completely distinct with names like Punk and Baby, next to the dining room.

Cider catching is offered as an optional drink pairing ($15) with the restaurant's five-course prix fixe dinner service, priced at $37 for a traditional Basque Country meal featuring cider-braised chorizo and a cowboy-style ribeye steak, or a vegetarian version for $32.

Each cider is designed to pair with the food, acting as a palate-cleanser and "getting you ready to eat more," explains Storm.

They're also raw and uncarbonated, so there are practical reasons behind the catching: "The whole act of the catch is to aerate the cider," same as swirling a glass of red wine. "In addition to aerating it, you're also making momentary carbonation. Anything you pour from a height is going to bubble for a second, and that's why you only catch a little bit at a time — it's about you drinking the cider when the cider is awakened and alive."

The entire dinner experience lasts about 2½ hours, with about 15 minutes between each course spent catching cider and learning about Basque ciders. It's a commitment, Storm acknowledges, but "being in among those barrels, you're touching history but you're also doing it. That lends itself to a deeper, personal connection. People hug us when they leave."

Brooklyn Cider House is open Tues-Sun at 1100 Flushing Ave., Bushwick; brooklynciderhouse.com

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Living in New York makes it easy to take the city for granted — your commute goes through Grand Central Station, your backyard is Prospect Park, and you can see a Broadway show any night of the week.

But it's worth taking a break from the hustle and experiencing the attractions that over 60 million tourists came to see last year during Must-See Week, when tickets to some of the best museums, tours and performances are 2-for-1. Just enter the code MUSTSEE18 when you buy tickets between Jan. 29 and Feb. 11.

So grab a friend and get excited about living here again — bitter cold and sketchy subways be damned. We've got recommendations for some of the best bets.

Have the perfect Valentine's moment

Meg Ryan may do some shady stuff in the name of love in Sleepless in Seattle, but we were still rooting for her to run Tom Hanks on top of the Empire State Building at the end. Have your own meet-cute in the sky on the weekend before Valentine's Day — there's nothing like the gorgeous Art Deco details and movie cred of the Empire State Building. ***$57, 350 Fifth Ave.***

Become a savvier consumer

After a major recent renovation, the Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum has been consistently offering groundbreaking exhibits. There's no better place to learn about how the shape, color and design of objects manipulate you — for the greater good or into making budget-busting mistakes. To avoid temptation, check out one of their current exhibits, The Virtue in Vice, about how designers use the Seven Deadly Sins to make objects irresistible. ***$16, 2 E. 91st St.***

Discover your neighborhood's history

Yes, even lifelong New Yorkers will learn something new on Inside Out Tours, known for their highly specialized topical walks like the Slavery and Underground Railroad Tour, about the men and women who literally built the foundations of the city, and the Queens Food Tour of the city's truly authentic Chinatown. The offer foodie tours, as well as a popular Statue of Liberty excursion. You know you've been meaning to get around to visiting her! ***$35, insideouttours.com***

The Virtue of Vice
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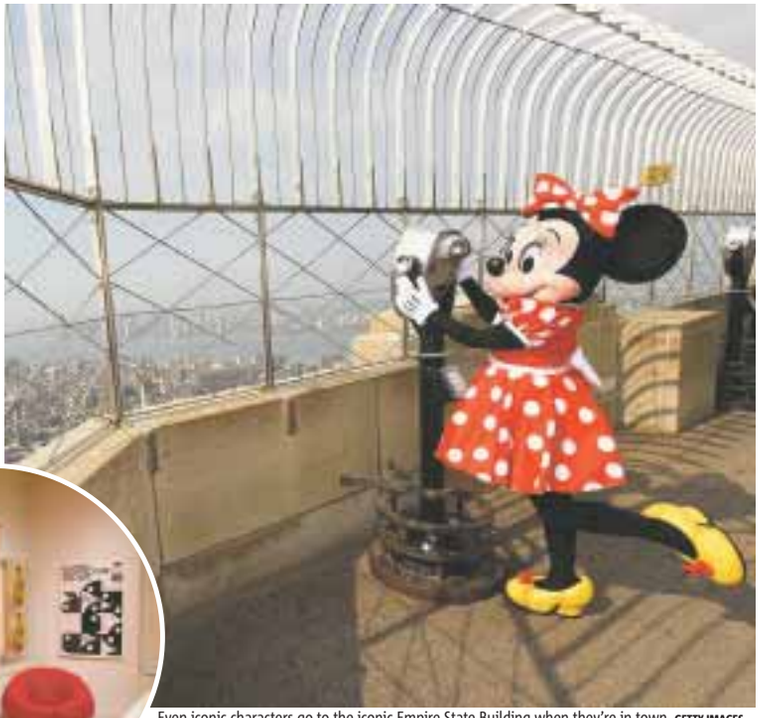
Take a deep dive into football

Just in time for the Super Bowl, check out one of the city's newest attractions: the NFL Experience.

Superfans will find a shrine to football, from iconic mementos for every team to one-of-a-kind foods straight out of home team stadiums around the country. But the experience actually skews toward newcomers to football, with exhibits that'll get you hands-on with the equipment and coaching to get you ready, and a 4-D theater that actually puts you in the game. ***$29, 20 Times Square***



Even iconic characters go to the iconic Empire State Building when they're in town. GETTY IMAGES

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Understanding the thyroid

What you need to know about common thyroid conditions and how to get treatment. ISTOCK

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The thyroid gland is a small organ. But it has a big job — it's part of the endocrine system, which affects many other systems in our bodies. According to the American Thyroid Association, an estimated 20 million Americans are living with some sort of thyroid disorder, and of that number, 60% are unaware of it. We spoke with Dr. Ilya Likhterov, assistant professor of otolaryngology (ears, nose and throat specialist) to find out more about thyroid health.

Can you explain what the thyroid does briefly?
A thyroid is a gland. It sits in the center of the neck and produces thyroid hormone, which then affects multiple other organ systems. You can think of it as a gas pedal for the body. When the thyroid hormone goes up, the energy consumption of the body increases; when the thyroid hormone is down, the energy consumption slows down. So, examples would be it promotes the heart to be faster, faster metabolism, weight loss, anxiety, etc. Weight gain, fatigue, hair loss — those are symptoms of a low thyroid hormone.

Are thyroid disorders something you're born with, you develop, or both?
It can certainly be both. [Common disorder Hashimoto's disease] and Graves' disease are thyroid dysfunctions where the body's immune system recognizes the thyroid cells as foreign and starts to attack them. That's something that develops later on. But there are certainly people who are predisposed genetically to thyroid dysfunction.

How are thyroid disorders diagnosed?
Usually patients with thyroid dysfunction come in with one of those symptoms I talked about: hyperthyroidism [overactive thyroid], hypothyroidism [underactive thyroid] and then a lab test is done to check the thyroid function.

Once a disorder is detected, how is it treated?
It depends on whether the thyroid hormone is up or down. If the thyroid hormone is down, Synthroid is a thyroid hormone supplementation. Sometimes thyroid hormone is given just to stabilize the activity of the thyroid. Thyroid cancer, which is what I specialize in, is most commonly treated by surgery. It really depends on the size of the tumor and the stage of it.

Can you remove your thyroid and live without it?
Yeah. I often remove it for suspicion or for diagnosis of cancer. Depending on the location of the tumor, just half of it can be removed. When the entire thyroid is removed, clearly the body no longer makes thyroid hormone and so the patient needs to go on thyroid supplementation. When half of it removed, often the remaining half is enough to give an adequate level for the body to continue to function.

SHEILA DOUGHERTY

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Dinwiddie, Burke bringing unlikely matchup in Nets, Knicks meeting

New York basketball has seen two surprising contributors in the backcourt this year.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

The Knicks, Nets rivalry for New York hasn't necessarily taken off due to both teams' lack of success this decade.

It's been one-sided this year as the Knicks have taken each of the first three matchups with two of those triumphs coming by 15 points or more.

If you're looking for some sort of consolation though, there is a tantalizing matchup at the point guard position coming up on Tuesday night from Madison Square Garden (7:30 p.m. ET). It's just not the names you were expecting back in September.

The injury bug has hit the Nets hard as Jeremy Lin went down for the season on opening night while D'Angelo Russell is working his way back to 100 percent after recovering from a knee injury.

For the Knicks, rookie point guard Frank Ntilikina continues to develop, though it has come with its fair share of growing pains.

So on Tuesday night, even with Russell expected to be back after taking a game off for rest, the top backcourt matchup could come in the form of Brooklyn's Spencer Dinwiddie facing off against the Knicks' Trey Burke.

Dinwiddie was expected to be a fringe guard in New York's backcourt behind Lin and Russell this season while Burke was just signed from the G-League on Jan. 14.

Yet the two have taken their chances and run with them, forcing New York basketball to sit up and take notice:

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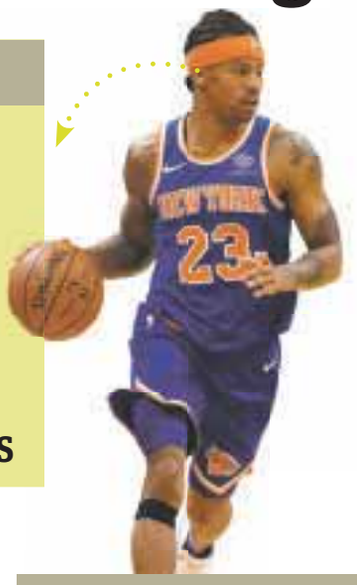

SPENCER DINWIDDIE

PER 36-MINUTE AVERAGES

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16.7 POINTS
39.5 FG%
8.2 ASSISTS
4.2 REBOUNDS
3.9 WIN SHARES

Knicks want to dump Noah

The New York Knicks have apparently had it with troubled veteran center Joakim Noah as the team is looking to dump him after a "heated verbal exchange" with head coach Jeff Hornacek last week, according to Yahoo Sports' Shams Charania.

Noah has done little to live up to the four-year, $72 million deal he signed prior to the 2016-17 season. Since he's joined the Knicks, Noah has appeared in just 53 games due to a combination of injuries and a drug suspension. His latest absence was originally chalked up to personal reasons, which have now been brought to light thanks to this Charania report.

With two years left on his sizeable contract, a player that's averaged 4.6 points and 7.9 rebounds per game is not going to be a legitimate trade target for any team around the league. The Knicks have received interest from potential suitors on their other three centers in Enes Kanter, Kyle O'Quinn and Willy Hernangomez.

Noah has also made it clear that he is not interested in a buyout. Per ESPN New York's Ian Begley, the 32-year-old has "no inclination to give back significant money on his contract."

He has appeared in just seven games this year while averaging just 5.7 minutes per outing in a crowded frontcourt.

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Isles short Coliseum stay made official

The Islanders will split time at the Coliseum and Barclays Center for the next three years.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced on Monday morning that the New York Islanders will split their regular-season home games between their current home, the Barclays Center, and their first home, the Nassau Coliseum, over the next three seasons until their new arena in Elmont is completed.

"The Islanders coming back to the Island is like the cherry on the cake because the Island is coming back," Cuomo said at a press conference housed in the renovated Coliseum.

In total, 12 games will be played at the Coliseum during the 2018-19 season while an even split will come into play during the following two seasons. New York's new home near Belmont Park is expected to be completed in time for the 2021-22 season.

The Coliseum, which is in Uniondale in Nassau County, served as the Islanders' first home from 1972-2015 where some of the best sightlines to watch a hockey game were offered. But the arena that became quickly outdated was never able to receive the necessary updates that an NHL-caliber venue needed, forcing the team to flee to Brooklyn by signing a 25-year lease with the Barclays Center.

While possessed all the bells and whistles of a new arena, was not built for hockey as obstructed-view seating and a basketball-first layout has done little to provide much of a home-ice advantage for the Islanders. The fans have responded by not making the trip out to Brooklyn as the Islanders' home attendance is ranked dead-last in the NHL, forcing the team and venue to look for a way out of their deal.

The New York Islanders will play 12 games at the Nassau Coliseum and more in the following two seasons. GETTY IMAGES

Both the Coliseum and Barclays Center are operated by Brooklyn Sports & Entertainment (BSE), which has made the prospect of splitting time between the two arenas that much more feasible. Along with countless Islanders fans, it's clear that BSE CEO Brett Yormark is done with the Islanders in Brooklyn.

"If the team wants to play more than half their games here, we encourage it and welcome them back," Yormark said.

The Coliseum underwent an 18-month, $165 million renovation shortly after the Islanders left, but it was redeveloped into more of a concert and special-events venue as it houses just 13,000 fans. The original Coliseum held over 16,000 for NHL games.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman was adamant in saying that the Coliseum was not a legitimate option to house the Islanders but after a tour of the facility on Jan. 9, he obviously relented to allowing it to become a temporary home, though there will likely be a move to add temporary seating and updating the locker rooms.

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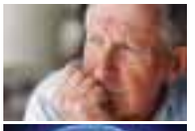

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All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Queens, County of Queens, City and State of New York, Block 1906 and Lot 19.
Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index # 5557/13.
Dominic a. Villoni, Esq., Referee
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Attorneys for Plaintiff

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COUNTY OF QUEENS
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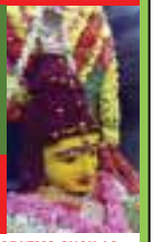

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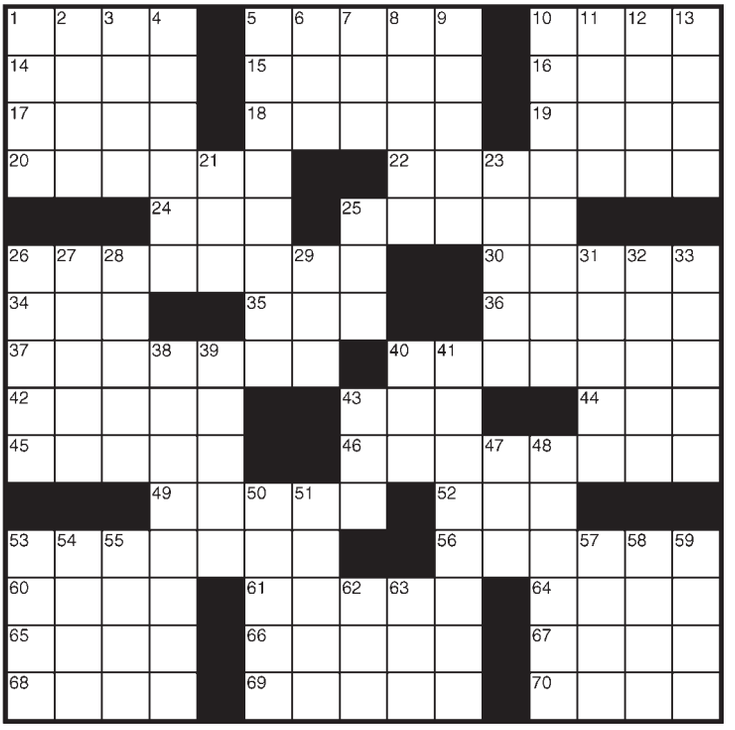
Across

1 Lacking panache
5 Cut a wide --
10 Biggers' sleuth
14 Moreno or Rudner
15 Mawkish
16 Roll-call yell
17 Shortly
18 Mindful
19 Low-fat spread
20 Grammar class
22 Frosty, for one
24 Mind reader's gift
25 -- with (took action)
26 Target (hyph.)
30 Clock fronts
34 Greek letter
35 Maiden-name indicator
36 Leno or Letterman
37 Least rigid
40 Daunt
42 Barracuda habitat
43 Previous to
44 Startled cry
45 Dependents
46 Really dislikes
49 Waterfowl
52 Beret
53 Shipwreck, maybe
56 Pack animals
60 Jai --
61 Maurice's thanks
64 Asian desert
65 Horse controller
66 Yummy pie
67 Corsica neighbor
68 Freighter hazard
69 Jargon
70 Coal deposit

Down

1 Declare boastfully
2 Queue
3 Nefertiti's god
4 "Messiah" composer
5 Whets
6 Exclamation of surprise
7 Police-blotter info
8 Brief
9 Scavenging animal
10 Chuck-wagon call
11 Ship's wheel
12 Kind of rug
13 Light in a tube
21 19th letter
23 Of yore
25 Joey or Kiki
26 Further down
27 City near Syracuse
28 Weaker, as an excuse
29 So far
31 Range sizes
32 Quay
33 Tries to locate
38 Spanking
39 Come later
40 "Where Eagles Dare" actress
41 Robin's offspring
43 Sullivan and Murrow
47 O'Hara's "-- Joey"
48 PR concerns
50 Free tickets
51 Bow down
53 Costume
54 Not into the wind
55 Fox's abode
57 Lawn pest
58 "Fernando" band
59 Yul's film realm
62 Electronics mfr.
63 Dismiss



metro.us/sudoku

easy

		5		1			6	
	1		3	6		9		
6					4		5	
1				2		4		
	4	2				7	3	
		8		3				1
	9		2					8
		3		9	1		2	
	8			7		3		

hard

		5			3	7		6
7			5			3	9	
3			7	9	6			
		9		7			5	
				1				
	4			6		8		
			8	5	1			3
	7	3			2			1
1		8	6			4		

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Channel your energy wisely. Don't take on responsibilities that don't belong to you. Being taken advantage of will only lead to resentment. Consider your options carefully.

Taurus Don't jump just because someone else does. Think and do things that further your own interests. Protect your home, family, position and reputation.

Gemini You'll be tempted to take a last-minute trip or make a hasty decision that could affect your prospects. Stop and think. Uncertainty should be a warning sign to sit tight.

Cancer Don't mix emotions and money. If you must make a decision regarding health, try not to be objective. An opportunity will only turn out well if you are moderate.

Leo Make the most of your day. Your energetic approach to relationships and physical challenges will change the way you do things. Motivation and perseverance are highlighted.

Virgo Keep moving and don't stop until you have taken care of all your responsibilities. Neglecting something important will not bode well with someone depending on you.

Libra Make personal adjustments that will boost your confidence and make you feel great. A promising offer will be made because of the way you present your skills.

Scorpio Learn all you can from people who have more experience or knowledge about something that interests you. What you discover will make a difference to your future.

Sagittarius An opportunity you are given should be looked at cautiously. Don't feel pressured to make a hasty move. A snap decision will lead to regret.

Capricorn Partnerships will disappoint you if you are too quick to agree or follow someone who decides to make a last-minute change. Stand alone, if necessary.

Aquarius An unexpected turn of events should be handled cautiously. Keep your personal information a secret. Double-check any information you receive.

Pisces Discuss your ideas and intentions. Sharing with others will help you gain support and the help you need to follow through. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

S	O	A	P		Y	O	K	E	D		B	A	S	E
A	B	L	E		A	R	O	M	A		A	G	E	D
C	O	M	P	E	N	D	I	U	M		L	U	C	Y
K	E	A		E	K	E		S	A	B	L	E	S	
			F	R	E	R	E		G	O	A			
R	E	P	A	I	D		S	H	I	N	D	I	G	
O	X	I	D	E		S	T	A	N		S	C	A	B
S	A	N		R	A	L	E	I	G	H		O	S	U
A	C	C	T		A	U	E	L		A	N	N	U	M
	T	H	E	O	R	E	M		C	L	A	S	P	S
			E	N	D		S	L	A	V	E			
	G	E	N	E	V	A		H	U	E		I	T	A
W	A	D	I		A	M	B	A	S	S	A	D	O	R
A	M	I	E		R	E	E	S	E		N	O	R	M
N	E	E	R		K	N	E	A	D		A	L	E	S

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